Howland Wood - Curatorial

Scovill Manufacturing Co.
[Waterbury, CT]

1935-1937

COPY OF LETTER IN LYMAN H. LOW SCRAPBOOK IN AM. NUM. SOC. LIBRARY

May 13, 1896

T. R. Hyde wrote to Lyman H. Low, after mentioning despatch of historical data by express:

"We may add that we have here quite a collection of tokens made by us and our predecessors, some of which undoubtedly were made during the period that you are working up. If you care ~~enough~~ about it to come in here we will be happy to show them to you, and let one of our men who made the collection and who is familiar with the pieces, tell you what he can about them

Very truly
Scovill Mfg. Co.
T. R. Hyde, Jr."

[cf. Comment on L. 130]

(Copy to Mr. Wood)

January 14, 1935

Dear Mr. Davis:

At the annual meeting of the American Numismatic Society last Saturday, I talked to the officers about your suggestion that replicas might be struck from your old token dies. They were greatly interested, and would much appreciate receiving a set. The name of the Scovill Manufacturing Company would, of course, be published in the Society's list of donors; and if the collection should prove to be extensive, would also be attached to an exhibit in their cases, open to the public.

Indeed, Mr. Howland Wood, the curator, and our leading American numismatic expert, suggested a method by which, at one and the same time, collectors could be protected against confusion between these restrikes and the originals, and also your firm might legitimately gain advantageous publicity. Instead of leaving the reverse of each replica a blank, why do you not use this side to make for yourselves contemporary "store cards"? You could say anything you wanted to, and arrange the inscription in any design that appeals to you. The following is a suggestion only.

Abel ~~Porter~~ Porter + Co., 1802

Leavenworth, Hayden + Scovill, 1811

This replica was struck in 1935 from the original die.

J. M. L. + W. H. Scovill, 1827

Scovill Manufacturing Co., 1850

I will remind you that collectors would be interested to have the proposed set of replicas include all coin or token dies that you find, no matter how closely they resemble one another, nor how badly worn, cracked, or broken they may be. Of course in the case of the poorer dies you would presumably make only a very limited issue.

I greatly appreciated your courtesy to me on the occasion of my recent visit to Waterbury, and your personal interest in furthering an idea that seems likely to yield results of value both to coin collectors and to your company.

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Z. Reed

E. H. Davis, Esq.
Scovill Manufacturing Co.
Waterbury, Conn.

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 1802.

WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT

IN REPLYING REFER TO E. H. Davis

January 15, 1935

Mr. A. Z. Reed
The Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of Teaching
522 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Reed:

Your letter of January 14 was most welcome.

Our old dies are, until we strike them up, an unknown quantity. They may include tokens and may not. Without much doubt, they will largely include monogram and other button designs. That was a very important part of our early history.

Our plan was to make simply a set of lead or soft metal strikes (or even mouldings) for the sake of identification and indexing. After that, we shall know where we are and what we want to do.

Your letter will be a most suggestive contribution to that part of the development.

With best wishes for the New Year,

Very truly yours,

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

EHD/RCW

Ed Davis

NRA MEMBER U.S. WE DO OUR PART

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 1802.

WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT

IN REPLYING REFER TO Edward H. Davis

May 23, 1935

Mr. A.Z. Reed
The Carnation Foundation for
the Advancement of Teaching
522 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Dear Mr. Reed:

Since my letter to you of January 15, I have been waiting for the impressions to be made from our old dies. This has now been done, by pouring in a plastic compound and we have some 800 forms to examine. Most of these are of early forms of buttons, business labels and similar commercial designs. Probably half of the forms are the reverse side of the others, although we do not have them so identified with each other.

There are no coins, so far as I can identify, and only a very limited number appear to be usable as tokens. None of them carry the legend which interested you in connection with your token search here in Waterbury last December. On the whole, I think our investigation has proved a pretty complete disappointment from your point of view. I think I shall be able to show you the forms at any time when you happen to be here, but I am sure it will not be worth a special trip. I shall, of course, be delighted to see you if you can come.

Very truly yours,

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

E H Davis

EHD/AG

NRA MEMBER U.S. WE DO OUR PART

After 5 days, return to
SCOVILL MANUFACTURING CO.
99 Mill St.,
WATERBURY, CONN.

VISIT
CONNECTICUT
TERCENTENARY
1935

May 28, 1935

Dear Mr. Davis:

I was very glad to receive your letter of May 23, as I was about to write you asking how you were getting along. Although the quest has not proved as fruitful in connection with my own specialty as I had hoped, there is still a good chance that it may yield something of value to American numismatists. I appreciate your permission to examine the forms, and assure you that either I myself, or sometody better qualified than myself, will certainly hope to accept your courteous offer, sometime this year.

Meanwhile, would it be too much trouble for you to answer the following questions?

1. I assume that some of the dies are either concave or convex--intended, in either case, to make convex impressions--and that in such cases they were used to make fronts for buttons, and that there was no die for the back or reverse. Is this right?

2. I assume, again, that many of the above convex buttons show the names of business firms, while others have only anonymous symbols, such as eagles, stave, etc. stars
Without making an exhaustive search, would you tell me whether among these are also some campaign buttons, containing heads of presidential candidates, or slogans such as
with "Down will Free Silver", etc.?

3. When the die is flat, it could be used for one side of a token--in which case, of course, another die would also be used for the other side. I understand that you have some such. Most of them probably contain commercial designs. These are of interest to coin collectors. What I want now to know, however, is this. Do you know whether the fact that a die is flat rather than concave or convex is a sure sign that it was used for a token, rather than for a button? I instinctively picture metallic buttons as being always convex. But as a matter of fact, was the front sometimes impressed by a flat die?

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Z. Reed

Mr. Edward H. Davis
Scovill Manufacturing Company
99 Mill St.
Waterbury, Conn.

6/17/35

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 1802.

WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT

IN REPLYING REFER TO E. H. Davis

June 13, 1935

Mr. Alfred Z. Reed
The Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of Teaching
522 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Dear Mr. Reed:

We are sorry to be delayed in answering your letter of May 28.

Answering your questions:

1. It is not a safe generalization that only convex stampings are button fronts. There are many cases of flat button fronts, - particularly railroads, fire departments, national guards, etc. As for the back or reverse side, it is difficult to say from our moldings, but we have not yet identified any which would appear to be button backs. Probably the standard die for the back (our Company name, etc.) was held out of the collection as a current tool until worn out, and then replaced or not as the business seemed to warrant.

2. You are right in your understanding that the convex forms cover a wide gamut, with and without titles, words, and numbers. Perhaps you will be interested in a rough classification:

Anchor Design Business Titles. Commemorative & Souvenir.
Departmental,as Police, fire, city, etc.
Eagle design, including double eagle.
Legends in foreign tongue. Military, Guards, etc.
Historic Portraits. Labels & Tags. Monogram & Initial.
Numerals only. Official & State.
Star (five point), several with Texas legend.
Railroad & Steamship titles.
Schools (initials mostly, with H.S., M.I., Cadet, etc.)
Odd Outlines. Coats of Arms. Patriotic Symbols. Tokens.

The Patriotic symbols include such symbols as -

Eagle fighting, eagle & snake, Indian, pine tree, liberty head or cap, shield with or without US, Cannon, sword & gun, flags, sword & cannon, GAR.

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SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

The Tokens include a number of Mine or Ranch money tokens and also symbols such as Pick & Shovel, man with pick, coal car, running man, US & shield, pack mule, and also "Washington, First in War, First in Peace" and "Free Silver Coinage-16."

3. You state that "commercial designs" are of interest to collectors. I think these would have to be seen to be classified. The rest of this question is answered under #1 above.

Very truly yours,

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Em Davis

EHD/AG E. H. Davis

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June 18, 1935.

Dear Mr. Davis,

Thank you very much for your full letter of June 13th.

Recently I showed our previous correspondence to Mr. Howland Wood, the Curator of the American Numismatic Society, and was gratified to have him volunteer the suggestion that he expected to spend the month of August in Westport, and would be interested to motor over and inspect your forms. I could not be of the party myself, but he knows vastly more about such matters than I do, and is in a position to make suggestions that might be of mutual benefit to American numismatists and to your firm. He is incidentally an ~~enjoyable~~ agreeable person whom you will enjoy meeting. If you consent to this transfer of your cordial invitation, will you please write me a brief note telling me whether you will be in Waterbury during August, and what particular person at what particular address, in your large plant he should communicate with before he motors over? I will then send all the previous correspondence to him to serve as memoranda and credentials.

Please give my best regards to Dr. Gregg when you next see him.

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Z. Reed

E. H. Davis, Esq.
Scovill Manufacturing Company
Waterbury, Connecticut

AZR:MWS

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 1802.

WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT

IN REPLYING REFER TO Edward H. Davis

June 20, 1935

Mr. Alfred Z. Reed
The Carnegie Foundation for the
Advancement of Teaching
522 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Reed:

I have your letter of June 18th. So far as I can now foresee, I expect to be on the grounds here during August and shall be very glad indeed to meet Mr. Wood. I think he will be able to make all the necessary contacts by direct approach to me. This may be by letter or telephone when he is in Westport and can make specific plans for himself.

Yours very truly,

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

E. H. Davis

EHD:C

NRA MEMBER U.S. WE DO OUR PART

THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING
522 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

June 21, 1935.

Dear Mr. Wood,

The enclosed sheaf of correspondence need not be returned. The top sheet is your invitation. The sheet below explains why all the rest is sent.

Good luck!

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Z. Reed

Alfred Z. Reed

Howland Wood, Esq.
American Numismatic Society
157 th Street and Broadway
New York, N. Y.

AZR:MMG

Inc.

June 26, 1935.

Mr. Alfred Z. Reed
The Carnegie Foundation
522 Fifth Avenue
New York City.

Dear Mr. Reed:

Your favor of the 21st with enclosures at hand. Later on I will communicate with the Meoville Company and see what I can do in making out coins from buttons.

Yours for coins and not buttons!

Very truly,

HW:JG

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 1802.

WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT

IN REPLYING REFER TO John H. Goss

September 3, 1935

Mr. Wood
American Numismatic Society
156th Street and Broadway
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Wood:

Confirming our telephone conversation of today:

Mr. E. H. Davis expects to be in the office on Monday, September 9th, and shall be glad to see you about ten-thirty.

Very truly yours,

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Belle C. Inglis

EHD:BCI

NRA MEMBER U.S. WE DO OUR PART

September 5, 1935.

Scovill Manufacturing Company
Waterbury, Conn.

Gentlemen: Attention: John H. Goss

Replying to your letter of September 3,I will drive up from Westport to Waterbury on Monday, September 9 and will be there about 10.30 and will take pleasure in looking over the various dies for tokens etc.

Very truly yours,

HW:JG

Curator

August 11, 1937

Scoville Manufacturing Co.,
Waterbury, Conn.

Gentlemen:

I note in various mint reports that you made a series of nickel coins for Haiti in 1904 and other years thereabouts. These coins are well known. Also, in 1904 you made 50,000 bronze 2¢ pieces and 50,000 1¢ pieces. I, nor any other collector that I know of, have ever seen speciments of these, although the nickel are still common. Can you give us any information concerning these? Were they ever delivered and put into circulation or were they held up by your concern and subsequently melted down?

If by any chance you should have any specimens remaining, would it be possible for us to get examples of each denomination?

Very truly yours,

Curator

HW ks

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 1802.

WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT

IN REPLYING REFER TO F. S. Hyde

August 13, 1937

The American Numismatic Society
Broadway Between 155th & 156th Sts.
New York, New York

Attention Mr. Howland Wood
Curator

Gentlemen:

ALL ORDERS ARE SUBJECT TO ACCEPTANCE BY THE COMPANY AT WATERBURY, CONN., AS CONNECTICUT CONTRACTS.
YOU ASSUME ALL RISKS OF DELAY DUE TO STRIKES, DIFFERENCES WITH WORKMEN, ACCIDENTS TO MACHINERY, DELAYS OF CARRIERS, FIRES, OR OTHER CAUSES FOR DELAY BEYOND OUR CONTROL.
IN ADDITION TO THE PRICES NAMED HEREIN YOU ARE TO PAY US ANY EXCISE TAXES FOR WHICH WE MAY BE LIABLE.

On receipt of your letter of the 11th regarding coins we made for Haiti, we examined our records and find that in 1907 and 1908 we made coins for subject, both being of the same design but one numbered "50" and the other numbered "20," which numerals we take to be centimes.

Unfortunately, the only samples of these coins that we have are those for our record file, and we regret therefore we are unable to send you samples.

Very truly yours,

SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

F. S. Hyde

FSH/MLH

General Manufacturing Division